



**GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
VIRGIN ISLANDS  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**



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## **DOH Informs the Public of What Legionella Is and How to Prevent It**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*US Virgin Islands, 02/04/2022* – Recently, cases of Legionnaires’ disease have been detected in both St Thomas and St Croix. Legionnaires’ disease, a type of severe pneumonia, is caused by breathing in tiny droplets of water containing Legionella bacteria.

In the US Virgin Islands, many residents rely on cisterns for water for showering and other household uses. These cisterns can be another place where Legionella can grow, so it is important to make sure to clean and disinfect your cistern regularly. Performing regular cleaning and maintenance on any shower heads, hot tubs, tank water heaters, and any other water tanks used to store potable water will help decrease your risk and keep your family safe.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Outbreaks of Legionnaires’ disease are often associated with large or complex water systems, like those found in hospitals, hotels, and cruise ships.

The most likely sources of infection include:

Water used for showering (potable water)  
Cooling towers (parts of large air conditioning systems)  
Decorative fountains  
Hot tubs

Signs and symptoms of Legionnaires’ disease can include:

► Cough ► Muscle aches ► Fever ► Shortness of breath ► Headache

If you develop pneumonia symptoms and may have been exposed to Legionella, see a doctor right away. Be sure to mention if you have used a hot tub, spent any nights away from home, or stayed in a hospital in the last two weeks.

This disease is a severe type of pneumonia (lung infection) caused by a bacteria called Legionella. For more information about Legionnaires’ disease, including an assessment and preventative maintenance toolkit, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html>.

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